

STATE OF ILLINOIS)
) SS.
COUNTY OF MENARD)

The Menard County Planning Commission met on September 29, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. at the Menard County Courthouse in Petersburg, IL.

The meeting was called to order and roll was taken by Chairperson Rod Riech. PC members Julie Wankel, John Dixon, Dennis Kunken, Landon Lounsberry, and Jack Knuppel were present.

Additionally, District 3 Menard County Commissioner Troy Cummings, District 5 Menard County Commissioners, Ed Whitcomb, Menard County Zoning Officer Jayme Ray, Menard County Coordinator Dara Worthington, and Menard County State’s Attorney Gabe Grosboll were present. Members of the public present were John and Judy Lyons, David and Rebecca Jordan, Terri Lamb, Chris Becker, Terry Entwistle and several surrounding neighbors.

Minutes from the August 25, 2022, meeting were presented. Planning Commission member John Dixon moved to approve the minutes. Planning Commission Julie Wankel seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

NEW BUSINESS

ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING: (CASE NUMBER 22-4TA)

APPLICATION FROM JOHN LYONS, d/b/a INDIAN CREEK FARMSTEAD LLC, ACTING ON HIS OWN BEHALF OR WITH LEGAL REPRESENTATION, REQUESTING A TEXT AMENDMENT TO ALLOW THE ADDITION OF FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE OBSTACLE COURSES, REMOTE CONTROL CAR ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL EVENT VENUES TO BE ALLOWED IN THE (AG) AGRICULTURAL ZONED DISTRICT.

The public meeting was opened for comments and considerations for Case Number 22-4TA at 6:01 p.m.

John Lyons represented himself to give an overview of his text amendment application. In 2012, Mr. Lyons opened Indian Creek Farmstead with the intent of running a seasonal business including a pumpkin patch, hay rack rides, etc. Indian Creek Farmstead has since grown into a jeep crawler course, event venue, remote-control racetrack, food vendor, barnyard, country store, and more. John described the layout of his 120-acre property which includes: four acres/three miles are timber trail for jeep and 4x4 vehicles, one acre is used for the remote-control racetrack, which is managed by his grandson, Matt Adams. The property also includes 200’ x 200’ parking, wildflower/sunflower field, corn field, and older and newer agricultural buildings.

To help control dust and noise, John Lyons has increased the green space between the homes adjacent to his property and added extra mulch on trails which also works as a noise barrier. An adhesive has been set on the RC track to draw back moisture to decrease the amount of dust.

Indian Creek Farmstead started to provide wedding venue service approximately six years ago. Music is kept between the 45-50 decibel level and must be turned off by 10:00 p.m. John will work on tightening the music noise rules to avoid conflict with neighbors. Live bands are not allowed, although acoustic players are welcome to play.

PC Member Jack Knuppel made a motion to close the public hearing. John Dixon seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

The Planning Commission went into deliberations.

After discussion and deliberation, the Planning Commission recommended the approval of the Special Event Venue text amendment. The jeep/4x4 and remote-control text amendment applications were tabled at this time and require further investigation.

UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC COMMENTS/REQUESTS

David Jordan, a neighbor to Indian Creek Farmstead, residing on Curtis Blacktop, provided comment. Mr. Jordan stated the music is so loud the bass shakes his windows and that he cannot watch tv unless he has headphones on. Mr. Jordan and his wife, Rebecca, have spent \$25,000 on trees and a fence to help alleviate some of the noise. Mr. Jordan is a disabled war veteran. The jeep and remote-control car noise is bothersome to him. The exhaust from vehicles is harmful as well since he is in heart/lung failure. Mr. Jordan has hundreds of video hours proving the party does not stop at 10 p.m. The smell of urine is overwhelming and attracting unwanted animals. As a result of the jeep trails, Curtis Blacktop becomes slick with mud and has caused him to slide into a ditch.

Teri Lamb, neighbor to Indian Creek Farmstead, commented next. Terri recalls moving to the agricultural district for peace, quiet, ducks, birds, and other wildlife. Terri cited a business policy in an agricultural district pointing out Indian Creek does not fall into the guidelines. Another main concern of hers in the trash left behind and drunk drivers on the road leaving the venue.

Chris Becker, also neighbor to Indian Creek Farmstead, made comment. Mr. Becker stated that Indian Creek started the pumpkin patch in 2012, Mr. Becker was okay with the business being seasonal/farm education as he works in the agriculture industry. Now that the establishment is running almost year-round, the constant noise and blowing dust is wearing thin on him and his family. Mr. Becker is concerned camping will be the next concern. He does not and will not support camping in his backyard.

ZONING OFFICER'S REPORT

There were not comments from the Zoning Officer.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBER COMMENTS

There were not comments from individual Planning Commission members.

ADJOURNMENT

As no other business was brought before the Planning Commission, John Dixon moved to close the public meeting. Jack Knuppel seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote. The public meeting closed at 7:09 p.m.